Tells the Facts and Names the Names

CounterPunch

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The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has, over the past few years, embarked on a special program that targets undocumented workers at garment factories for deportation. In 1996, the INS raided scores of sweatshops in New York City alone and arrested nearly 2,000 workers for illegal status. In some cases, garment companies - which depend heavily on undocumented workers — have taken advantage of the raids by fingering union organizers for arrest.

And who is turning the workers in? In many cases the very agency that is supposed to be protecting them: the US Department of Labor. CounterPunch has found out that the Department's Wage and Hour Division has been reporting to the INS when it comes across undocumented workers in the course of its factory inspections. In other words, if workers complain to Wage and Hour about being cheated out of their overtime pay they're more likely to get deported than they are to recover the stolen money. "It has a significant chilling effect on workers and worker-based organizations", Peter Rukin, attorney with the Latino Workers Center in New York, tells us. "We cannot assure a worker that information [given to Wage and Hour] will not be shared with the INS." Rukin refers complaints only to the New York State Department of Labor, which is prohibited by state law from giving information to the INS.

Former Labor Secretary Robert Reich recalls that when he accompanied WHD inspectors to garment factories, the workers were frightened and sometimes hid when they arrived. "The commitment to ridding our workplaces of undocumented workers has been and continues to be a much higher priority than shutting down sweatshops," he says.

Some background: In the 1940s and 1950s, US garment workers were highly unionized and wages were at an all-time high. Salaries began to decline steadily through the following decade as industry ran south to seek non-union labor, then plummeted during the 1970s as globalization took hold and companies found even cheaper, more exploitable workers in the Third World.

Government policies as well as economic forces have contributed to the downward pressure on wages. In the 1980s, the Reagan administration undermined the domestic garment industry by encouraging US firms to locate abroad and produce for export back into this country. The US Agency for International Development provided subsidies for US manufacturers to relocate overseas.

Such policies have accelerated the downward spiral of the industry and sharply reduced the number of domestic apparel jobs, which dropped from 1.45 million in 1973 to 750,000 in 1998. The decline in jobs and wages decimated the two big unions that represented garment workers, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (which merged to form UNITE in 1995). Not coincidentally, it was during this period that sweatshops began to regain their hold in the US.

As is the case abroad, domestic manufacturers and retailers pass onto subcontractors the problems of holding down wages and disciplining workers. A 1997 Department of Labor survey found that in New York City, where the industry is centered, nearly two-thirds of garment shops failed to comply with federal wage

(**Sweatshops**, *continued on page 6)*

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Our Little Secret

And Now the Reprisal

Jim McDougal's death in a federal prison, apparently caused by medical negligence, is having a sinister sequel. Now it seems that officials at the Fort Worth Medical Center, where McDougal died, are retaliating against T.J. Lowe, the inmate who wrote to us with the real story of McDougal's demise five months ago (see CounterPunch, June 15, 1998).

In mid-October, corrections officers raided Lowe's cell, where he has been in solitary confinement and seized all of his correspondence, on the preposterous grounds that it posed a fire hazard. They also took away his medicines, an extra blanket, and a radio he had smuggled in to solitary to, as Lowe's friend Kay Lee told us, "try to stay sane". (Lowe was arrested in San Diego in 1993 and charged with growing and selling marijuana. Though a first-time offender, he was sentenced to a seven-year prison term.)

Lowe's health has deteriorated since his arrest and he now faces serious medical risks, diagnosed with Crohn's disease, an excruciatingly painful ailment of the lower intestine. Six doctors have said Lowe needs surgery. Lowe had an emergency operation at San Diego's Lompoc prison and had a second surgery scheduled to definitively treat the disease. Since then, Lowe has been shipped around to four different prisons and the surgery has never been performed.

Lowe's doctor at Fort Worth Medical Center—the prisoners call it the Pine Box Medical Center—has said that surgery isn't required. Instead, Lowe has been treated with a variety of drugs that have done little good. Indeed, one drug, sulfasalazine, has done harm: Lowe was taken off that medication when it was found to have caused liver damage.

During the past month, Lowe has lost 25 pounds. He is suffering from nausea, internal bleeding, cramps and vomiting. Kay tells us that Lowe's doctor has recommended that he take Pepcid, the over-the-counter product used to treat indigestion, to counter these symptoms. (She says that doctors at Fort Worth prescribe aspirin for prisoners with AIDS.)

Lowe is scheduled to be released from prison next September, but Lee fears he won't make it. "If nothing is done he's going to die like McDougal did."

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Juries and Oprah

Ignored by every slavery historian, by Oprah Winfrey's new film Beloved as well as by the current traveling exhibit on slavery shown in public libraries, is the possibility that slavery might have been resolved peaceably through trials by jury - without war, without KKK, without proclamation of emancipation. No "Thirteenth Amendment" needed!

This is the contention of our friend Godfrey D. Lehman, author of We The Jury (Prometheus Books), one chapter of which shows how northern juries, particularly in Massachusetts, did just that 80 years earlier. In a group of trials extending over about 13 years, culminating in a series of four, between 1781 and 1783, juries, although consisting exclusively of white men, decreed that "They in Africa had the Same Right to enslave us."

John Adams, as vice-president in 1795, reminisced about pre-Revolutionary experiences in a letter to Rev. Jeremy Belknap that "I never knew a Jury by a Verdict to determine a Negro to be a slave. They always found them free." The "mortal blow" was struck in 1783 when a jury had been asked to interpret a clause in the new Massachusetts state consistitution declaring that all men were born free as covering blacks as well as whites. The jury - albeit twelve white men - unhesitatingly decreed that it did. As a result, "escaped" slave Quock Walker, seized and beaten by his putative master, was set free, and the institution lost all legal support in the state.

Lehman, whose in-progress fourth book on the jury includes a chapter on southern juries, observes that it is the more surprising not that a majority of panels upheld slavery, but that there were as many as there were - again white men only - which rejected it. Recall that many panels called "juries" were stacked exclusively with slaveholders, and blacks were often not permitted to offer testimony.

According to Lehman, an ardent promoter of jury nullification, as are we, "the tantalizing question is: Would southern juries have followed the Massachusetts pattern had they been true juries - that is not stacked, fully informed of the evidence and their powers, and not judicially dominated. There is evidence this was happening in some states".

The Home Crowd

On October 6, the National Audubon Society held an Environmental Economics Symposium in Miami, Florida. The star of the event was EPA director Carol Browner, who was presented with the "Guy Bradley Lifetime Conservation Award". Browner was back on her home turf, having served as director of Florida's environmental management department before she joined the Clinton administration. Her tenure in Florida was less than stellar, as her department made one deal after another with developers, timber companies, utilities and sugar barons. Browner's acceptance speech at the event featured yet another homage to win-win environmentalism. "Economic growth and environmental protection can co-exist", Browner said.

This equation certainly came as reassuring news to the event's three main financial sponsors: Florida Power and Light, operator of a troubled nuclear plant; South Florida Water Management District, prime facilitator of the destruction of the Everglades; and the St. Joe Company, the DuPont-owned timber and land company, which reigns as Florida's biggest real estate developer.

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NAME OF THE GAME

Amid the abuse hurled at Gary Webb in the wake of his Dark Alliance series, his critics smacked the reporter with this charge: Webb knew so little about the CIA, they said, that he confused CIA "officers" with "agents" and "agents" with "assets". So-called "intelligence" reporters such as the Washington Post's Walter Pincus used Webb's supposed lapse as a way to bludgeon him and at the same time boost their own credibility by showing off their intimate knowledge of Agency argot.

But it now turns out that the CIA's top lawyers were themselves utterly confused about what constituted an Agency "employee" and how that differed from a contractor, agent and asset. This internal debate was a vital one for the CIA, since it was at the crux of a 1982 Memorandum of Understanding between then CIA director William Casey and Reagan's Attorney General William French Smith which permitted the agency to overlook narcotics trafficking by "non employees". According to the recently released Inspector General's report on Contra drug running, prior to March 2, 1982, CIA officers, agents, assets and independent contractors were all legally considered "agency employees". However, when it became clear that many of the agents, assets and contractors involved in the CIA's Contra program had their hands in the cocaine trade, CIA lawyers scrambled to concoct a new definition of "employee".

Bernard Makowka, a CIA attorney with the Office of General Counsel, said that CIA definitions of "employee" were inconsistent until 1982, when he was instructed by his boss Edmund Cohen to "narrow" the definition of the term. But even after Makowka redrafted the definition, Agency lawyers remained befuddled. Makowka said he believed that "an independent contractor is not a contract employee and therefore is not an employee for purposes of the MOU". Makowka's superior, Cohen, had a different understanding. Cohen believed that "contractor" meant a person with "staff access, but was not intended to cover assets or agents".

George Clarke, the CIA's chief of intelligence community affairs at the time, presented a third explication for the troublesome term. Clarke said that "employee" referred only to "individuals who were processed by the CIA's Office of Personnel". Clarke explained that "crimes reporting requirements did not cover anyone with whom the Directorate of Operations dealt with operationally." Confused? If the CIA had asked CounterPunch we could have quickly solved their dilemma. Our view: An employee is anyone the employer provides with health insurance.

MORE GOOD NEWS, PETE

Rep. Bernard Sanders took to the floor of the House this fall and said that although he was a staunch foe of nuclear power he had come to the conclusion that it was "a fact of life" and that the best way to deal with the nuclear waste generated by his home state of Vermont was to ship it across the country to a west Texas border town called Sierra Blanca. Sierra Blanca is poor, populated primarily by Hispanics. Sanders said he had performed a rigorous search of the country and had concluded that this small community was absolutely the best place to dump the waste.

One of the best sites for Vermont's nuclear waste is right back in Bernard Sanders' home town.

With the backing of Vermont's liberal Senator Patrick Leahy and Texas Governor George Bush, and the lobbying efforts of former Texas governor Anne Richards, the TX-VT Radioactive Waste Compact moved through Congress in October and was signed into law by President Clinton, despite previous pledges of a veto.

Then, we are happy to report (in our continuing pledge to provide good news and victories) on October 23 this unholy alliance was handed a terrible defeat from a wholly unexpected front: the Texas Resource Conservation Commission, the state body responsible for licensing the dump site. Never known as one of the nation's most fierce environmental review boards, the TRCC, nevertheless, showed a more enlightened environmental conscience than Sanders and his allies when it ruled on a 3-0 vote that the siting of the planned dump might discriminate against poor Hispanics and that it might be unsafe, due to an earthquake fault that runs beneath the site.

Dump advocates are now vowing to move the site to the Texas-New Mexico border, but it's CounterPunch's considered opinion, after an exhaustive review, that the best site for Vermont's nuclear waste is back in Bernard's home base of Burlington.

THE SPECTRE OF ADOLF

These days the notion that A. Hitler survived the war is regarded as the fantasy of nutcases. Often this is true. But fifty years ago it was taken extremely seriously by cold-eyed men with their feet on the ground. We refer to lawyers working in the entertainment industry. In the immediate postwar period the German director, G. W. Pabst made a movie about Hitler. It was well received in Germany. But Pabst could never get distribution in either the US or the UK. The lawyers pointed out that if, as was widely rumored, Adolf was still alive somewhere in Argentina or the Brazilian hinterland, he might emerge and sue both the director and the distributors for libel. The lawyers had their way.

FOR BOOKWORMS ONLY

Okay, bookworms. Who wrote this about who, and where? "...the sublimest poem published in our language between the last masterpiece of Milton and the first masterpiece of Shelley... No comparable work is to be found in English poetry between the date of Samson Agonistes and the date of Prometheus Unbound; and with both these great works it has some points in common."

Clue: The writer of the "sublimest poem" raised an army of volunteers and led them to Spain at his own expense to fight Napoleon. Another clue: The author of these commendatory lines once greeted the Goncourt brothers (who were looking for decadence and found more than they bargained for) chanting hymns to liberty in classical Greek and occasionally lifting a severed human hand from its pickling jar of formaldehyde and tenderly kissing it.

BUY EARLY, BUY OFTEN

Recent speaking tours by CounterPunchers St. Clair and Cockburn have prompted brisk sales of Whiteout: The CIA, Drugs and the Press. We continue to offer CounterPunch subscribers Whiteout for the incredible price of $18, shipping and postage included. Likewise, Ken Silverstein's Rabelaisian account, Washington on $10 Million a Day, continues to be the best guide to Babylon and is available for only $15. It's not too late to lay in a supply for distribution to the deserving during the Holiday Season. ■

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The CIA and the Origins of the Contras

Drugs, Kidnapping, Robbery and Extortion

Just under two years ago John Deutch, at that time director of the CIA, travelled to a town meeting in South Central Los Angeles to confront a community outraged by charges that the Agency had been complicit in the importing of cocaine into California in the 1980s. Amid heated exchanges Deutch publicly pledged an internal investigation by the CIA's Inspector General that would leave no stone unturned.

It is now possible to review, albeit in substantially censored form, the results of that probe. At the start of this year the Inspector General, Fred Hitz, released a volume specifically addressing charges made in 1996 in the San Jose Mercury News. Earlier this month Hitz finally made available for public scrutiny a second report addressing broader allegations about drug running by Nicaraguan Contras.

That first volume released ten months ago was replete with damaging admissions. Two examples: The report describes a cable from the CIA's Directorate of Operations dated October 22, 1982, describing a prospective meeting between Contra leaders in Costa Rica for "an exchange in [US] of narcotics for arms." But the CIA's Director of Operations instructed the Agency's field office not to look into this imminent arms-for-drugs transaction" in light of the apparent involvement of US persons throughout." In other words, the CIA knew that Contra leaders were scheduling a drugs-for-arms exchange and the Agency was prepared to let the deal proceed.

In 1984, the Inspector General discloses, the CIA intervened with the US Justice Department to seek the return from police custody of $36,800 in cash which had been confiscated from a Nicaraguan drug smuggling gang in the Bay Area whose leader, Norwin Menesses, was a prominent Contra fund-raiser. The money had been taken during what was at the time the largest seizure of cocaine in the history of California.

The CIA's Inspector General said the Agency took action to have the money returned in order "to protect an operational equity, i.e., a Contra support group in which it [CIA] had an operational interest." Hitz also unearthed a CIA memo from that time revealing that the Agency understood the need to keep this whole affair under wraps because, according to the memo (written by the CIA's assistant general counsel), "there are sufficient factual details which would cause certain damage to our image and program in Central America."

The 146-page first volume is full of admissions of this nature but these two disclosures alone — allowing a Contra drug deal to go forward, and taking extraordinary action to recoup the proceeds of a drug deal gone awry — should have been greeted as smoking guns, confirming charges made since 1985 about the Agency's role.

The IG's bottom line on what the CIA knew and when it knew it: From the start the Contras were dealing drugs.

The report issued by Hitz a few weeks ago is even richer in devastating disclosures. The Inspector General sets forth a sequence of CIA cable traffic showing that as early as the summer of 1981, the Agency knew that the Contra leadership "had decided to engage in drug trafficking to the United States to raise funds for its activities."

The leader of the group whose plans a CIA officer was thus describing was Enrique Bermudez, a man hand-picked by the Agency to run the military operations of the main Contra organization. It was Bermudez who told Contra fund-raisers and drug traffickers Norwin Menesses and Danilo Blandon (as the latter subsequently testified for the government to a federal grand jury,) that the end justified the means and they should raise revenue in this way.

One of Bermudez's associates in those early days was Justiniano Perez, who headed up sabotage operations for the Contra group. Perez, presumably one of the men Reagan was referring to when he called the Contra leaders the "moral equivalent of our founding fathers," aggressively pursued a plan of bombings of civilian centers in Nicaragua and assassinations. He also developed a Contra fundraising scheme that, according to CIA memos, relied on "kidnapping, extortion and robbery." In late 1981, Perez quit the main Contra unit because he didn't feel it was ruthless enough. The CIA desperately wanted to bring him back. A 1982 CIA memo asked if Perez "could be influenced to employ tactics other than those used by terrorists." The answer the Agency apparently wanted to hear was "no". By 1984 Perez was viewed as "the only person in the entire FDN with the leadership, charisma and military tactical ability to make the movement go forward in the manner CIA would like."

The CIA was uneasily aware that its failure to advise the Contras to stop drug trafficking might land it in difficulties, Hitz documents that the Agency knew that at that time it should report Contra plans to run drugs to the Justice Department and other agencies such as FBI, DEA and Customs. Nonetheless the CIA kept quiet, and in 1982 got a waiver from the Justice Department giving a legal basis for its inaction.

Hitz enumerates the Contra leaders ("several dozen") the CIA knew to be involved in drug trafficking, along with another two dozen involved in Contra supply missions and fund-raising. He confirms that the CIA knew that Ilopango Air Base in El Salvador was an arms-for drugs Contra transhipment point, and discloses a memo in which a CIA officer orders the DEA "not to make any inquiries to anyone re Hanger [sic] No. 4 at Ilopango."

Thus, the CIA's own Inspector General shows that from the very start of the US war on Nicaragua the CIA knew the Contra were planning to traffick in cocaine into the US. It did nothing to stop the traffic and, when other government agencies began to probe, the CIA impeded their investigations. When Contra money raisers were arrested the Agency came to their aid and retrieved their drug money from the police.

So, was the Agency complicit in drug trafficking into Los Angeles and other cities? It is impossible to read Hitz's report and not conclude that this was the case. ■

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Whole Food, Whole Phoo-ey

Natural food is big business these days, which is a good thing. Most cities these days have a farmers' market, and the ag industry is coming to realize that organic food is no longer a matter of selling misshapen carrots and potatoes at a premium to hippies, but of tapping a huge market.

Of course, where there's profit, there's knavery. The new "organic" standards mandated by the USDA have little to do with sound, pesticide-free farming, and everything to do with false labeling on corporate junk. And, as we shall now relate, the knavery is extending to retail outlets that have made their reputation and millions of dollars on catering to consumers who want organic and environmentally friendly produce.

No retail business has exploited this market more profitably than Whole Foods Market, a chain based in Austin, Texas, which operates a hundred stores nationwide and which rings up $1.2 billion a year in sales. The company's motto is "Whole Foods, Whole People, Whole Planet," and offers customers the Whole Foods' "Declaration of Interdependence," a phrase lifted from the poet Gary Snyder. Among the assertions in this Declaration: "We are the leader in supporting organic agriculture. We're committed to protecting the environment. Our shelves are packed with environmentally-friendly products."

One of us here at CounterPunch occasionally looks in on the Whole Foods store in Berkeley, on the corner of Ashby and Telegraph. For a number of years the Berkeley left shunned the place because of its anti-union posture. "Interdependence" is not translated by Whole Foods to mean "union." The store is so bright-eyed with assertions of planetary good works that the innately suspicious CounterPuncher becomes cynical and goes off in search of dowdier establishments purportedly committed to the organic path.

Such suspicions, it turns out, are well-founded. Earlier this year the San Francisco-based Earth Island Institute developed a program to certify shrimp caught by equipment that doesn't endanger turtles. Knowing Whole Food's reputation as a marketer of enviro-friendly products, Earth Island approached the company about selling shrimp that had been certified as "turtle safe." But they were given a cold shoulder by the company, and this rebuff was followed by a direct attack on Earth Island by Whole Foods' CEO John Mackey.

In an interview in Forbes magazine, Mackey accused Earth Island of "hounding" his company to sell turtle-safe shrimp. He also charged that Earth Island was trying to strong-arm Whole Foods into paying a fee for use of the Institute's "turtle safe" imprimatur. Earth Island strongly rebuts Mackey's slurs. "This is just not true," says Teri Shore who is the director of Earth Island's turtle-safe shrimp campaign. "Earth Island never charged anyone for certification and anyway the shrimp is certified at the point of harvest by the fishers, not at the retail level. We were simply asking Whole Foods Market to make good on its policy of environmental leadership and offer the shrimp to its customers."

"Interdependence" is not translated by Whole Foods to mean "union".

So far from doing this, Whole Foods has begun offering a "natural Caribbean shrimp" in packaging that carries a label saying "turtle and environment safe." This label bears a marked resemblance to the certification label sponsored by Earth Island. But whereas Earth Island's label is backed up by independent ship inspectors who certify that the shrimp nets are equipped with turtle excluder devices, the logo attached to shrimp sold by Whole Foods is based only on the company's own assertions that their operations are environmentally sound.

When Earth Island began to criticize Whole Foods publicly, Mackey sent a self-aggrandizing e-mail to Earth Island where he said that "your attacks on Whole Foods Market are strategic mistakes because you are alienating a company who by its very nature and mission is dedicated to helping environmental organizations such as your own. However, our desire is to help proactive and non-adversarial environmental organizations who are above all else committed to the truth (who don't exaggerate or make misleading claims for the sake of their own Tholy cause.')"

Note Mackey's emphasis on helping "environmental organizations," a function which, as CounterPunch readers will know, is often markedly different than helping the environment. So what organization is Whole Foods Market helping in this instance? None other than Ocean Trust, which Whole Foods describes as "a marine conservation foundation." Whole Foods even disseminates Ocean Trust's handouts to its customers. As Mackey noted in his e-mail, "they [Ocean Trust] have been instrumental in providing facts and information for us to buy seafood responsibly with the environment, freshness, and quality all kept in mind. We believe that we are working with experts in environmental marine science."

Ocean Trust is hardly the turtle-friendly outfit claimed by Mackey, being little more than a seafood trade organization, with a budget financed almost entirely by the seafood industry. Ocean Trust's executive director (and sole full-time staffer) is Thor Lassen, whose career has included a stint as lobbyist for the National Fisheries' Institute, the seafood industry's primary trade organization. In 1997 Lassen was featured as prominent speaker at the Wise Use movement's annual confab in Washington, titled "Fly In for Freedom". ■

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(**Sweatshops**, *continued from page 1)*
and hour laws. "The only ones who are making any money are the ones willing to steal from the government in taxes, cheat their workers in wages and cheat the union by not paying health and welfare benefits", a Department of Labor official says. "If somebody tries to comply with the law they will not make anything in this business".

Even as the industry pushes for lower labor costs, it is banking billions in profits. And while retailers claim to have no ability to police the conditions under which their clothes are manufactured, they hold tremendous power, partly because of the industry's extreme concentration. The top 40 retailers control 80 percent of the market, and the top ten control 65 percent. This gives them the power to set pay scales for the entire industry.

The Wage and Hour Division's contribution to this bleak state of affairs has been to further squeeze garment workers. The INS began targeting the industry in 1996 — the same year that the Labor Department was at the height of its anti-sweatshop effort - and many of the shops it raided were, according to Mark Thorn, a spokesman for the New York INS office, based on referrals by Wage and Hour.

Wage and Hour's cooperation with the INS contrasts unflatteringly to the chilled relationship it maintains with a sister agency, the Occupational health and Safety Administration. The GAO noted in a 1990 report that the two offices barely communicated. Things haven't gotten much better since, according to an OSHA official in New York. He estimated that in 1997, his office got less than twenty referrals from Wage and Hour.

Enforcing workplace safety and fair wages is only possible if workers feel comfortable filing complaints with the government agencies that are supposed to protect them. But with garment workers knowing that a Wage and Hour inspection might well be followed up by a raid by the INS, they have no reason to come forward. "There is enormous pressure on a worker not to complain, because they think their job will be at stake," said Susan Cowell, the vice president of UNITE.Consider a raid by federal agents on the STC sweater factory in Queens, New York several years ago. The factory's managers were forcing employees to work long hours without overtime pay and had threatened the workers if they tried to form a union. Unfortunately, the federal agents were from the INS - they'd been tipped off by Wage and Hour - and they carted off undocumented workers to jail and had deportation proceedings initiated against them. The INS agents brought along a list of pro-union employees, which was sent to them by a former INS district director for New York, Henry Dogin — then a lawyer for the factory owner.

"If somebody tries to comply with the law they will not make anything in this business".

Undocumented workers are attractive to employers precisely because their precarious legal situation makes them powerless to protest against poor pay or work conditions. Wing Lam, a director of the Chinese Staff Workers Association, tells us that documented workers sometimes claim to be illegal because it increases the chance that they will be hired.

Meanwhile, the Labor Department's ongoing anti-sweatshop campaign has done little to stop abuses. Remember the Kathy Lee Gifford scandal of 1996, when it turned out that sweatshops in mid-Manhattan were manufacturing the TV-star's line of Wal-Mart clothing? Kathy Lee sniveled in public embarassment while her husband Frank Gifford showed up at the factory handing out one hundred dollars bills to workers.

But last December, another New York garment factory, producing not only for Wal-Mart but K-mart, Nordstrom and The Limited, was busted for sweatshop conditions. Retailers were monitoring the shop, but somehow missed the on-site labor abuses. So much for industry self-policing.

A couple of issues ago at CounterPunch we described efforts by the workers to unionize the Avondale shipyards in Mississippi. Workers, so ill-paid that even after working a forty hour week they still have to apply for food stamps, voted for a union. But the employers have thus far successfully delayed matters. Avondale became a parable about lack of will in government officials, from Bill Clinton and Al Gore down, who strut about in union conventions proclaiming their undying devotion to workers rights. But take the case of Avondale: almost all its work is done under contract with the US government. It would be an hour's work for any determined Democratic administration to twist Avondale's arm until the company did the right thing and it would not take much longer for any such determined government to insure that the snitching done by the Labor Department to the INS stops forthwith. ■

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Journalism for grown ups

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